

New York Saturday Evening Post

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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Vol. VI.

W. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams, PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 11, 1875.

TERMS IN ADVANCE:

One copy, four months, \$1.00
One copy, one year . . . 3.00
Two copies, one year 5.00

No. 300.

A LOVE SONG.

BY N.—.

Where the nightingale warbles at setting of sun,
I wander alone with my love at my side;
And, kissed by the shade of a grove around gathering dusk,
Her cheek with the tint of the blushing rose is dyed.
CHORUS.
And I whisper, "Sweet maiden, all blindly I grope,
Let thine eye light my pathway, beacon of hope.
Oh! thine heart that in darkness doth grope,
Be thine eye to its pathway a beacon of hope."
On her sleek's satin surface the long lashes rest;
And drooping like a lily the gale
Too roughly caresses; and covers her breast
As the ring dove's when dangers her nestlings assails.
CHORUS. And I whisper, etc.

Now the snowy lids lifting, disclose to my sight
Two lamps empyrean, illumined by the soul,
Whose effulgent beams, bursting afar on the night,
Guide my spirit to safety and peace to its goal.
And I whisper, "Sweet maiden, no longer I grope;
For thine eye lights my pathway, a beacon of hope;
No longer, sweet maiden, in darkness I grope;
For the light of thine eye is my beacon of hope."



She fairly leered in Ethel's pale, contemptuous face.

Vials of Wrath:
or,
THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "TWO GIRLS' LIVES," "LOVE-BLIND," "OATH-BOUND," "BARBARA'S FATE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUB ROSA.

THE moment Frank Havelstock met the household in the breakfast-parlor, the morning after Georgia's interview with her husband, that had resulted with such pitiful fatuity, he saw at a first glance that the event had transpired—the event upon which he had builded his plans, the event he had caused to transpire by his far-sighted, quiet treacherousness.

It was done, exactly as he hoped—it would be done, although when he could not decide and care less to know. All he wanted to know was known and seen by him, as he sauntered among the gay little party that was grouped in one end of the apartment.

Ida Wynne met his low, half-confidential greeting with a flush of frank delight, he had such a way of making all women believe he was really but for them.

"You surely enjoyed the 'pleasant dreams' I wished you last night, Miss Wynne, for you have come from the sacred realms of slumber as fresh as a rose."

His cool, critical eyes were taking in every detail of her fascinating toilet, from the light-blue knot of ribbon in her flowing hair to the pearl buttons in her white lawn wrapper. He thought what a pretty, graceful little thing she was; hardly enough fire in her to suit him, but certainly very sweet, girlish, and appreciative. He mentally decided that, and the while made a certain tender light radiate from his eyes; it was second nature to him to please women.

And Ida, with a thrill of her foolish heart, thought—well, wild, vague thoughts, that she herself scarcely understood, except that she was very happy, and was glad Mr. Havelstock was come to Tanglewood.

He sauntered leisurely from Ida's side, and exchanged greetings with the other guests, and then found himself at Georgia's side, looking with vanity triumphant eyes that did not betray themselves in her still, marble-calm face, that showed traces to his and her husband's notice alone, of the awful storm of passion she had weathered. She was pleasantly, resolutely affable, as she always was—the quiet, polished hostess, the fair, noble, undemonstrative woman. Havelstock bowed, then gave her his hand.

She did not hesitate to lay her own in it, although, as she raised her blue eyes instant to his face, Havelstock saw a peculiar expression in them—a half wistful look, as if merrily begging his sympathy; a half reproachful one, as if all unconsciously, her fine womanly perception recognized him as the destroyer of her happiness; as if she felt as she touched his hand—and felt without accepting the intuition—that his was the hand that had driven the iron into her very soul.

Havelstock understood the subtle influence that affected her, and he knew, as well, that her vague unrest would not unpleasantly affect him; and so he smiled, gravely, and with frank, honest courtesy that seemed strangely acceptable to her—that added fresh proof to Lexington, who saw it, that Havelstock was a choice friend indeed.

"You are not looking so well as I would wish, Mrs. Lexington. You were up too late last night, I fear. May I prophecy that a happy event to-day will restore your temporarily vanished bloom?"

She could not misinterpret him, and a wild, pained look leaped into her eyes; a weary, heart-sick expression whitened around her lips.

"Do not forecast for me, Frank, for there remains nothing now. That is all over with."

Her wailing complaint smote him, a moment, as he dropped her hand. Then Lexington's clear, cheery voice dissipated his regret.

"Come, Havelstock, you are monopolizing Georgia's attention entirely too much, considering the state of our appetites. Suppose you give an arm to Ida, and we'll have breakfast?" Mrs. Lexington.

He offered her his arm with a gallantry that

perfectly deceived every one who needed to be deceived; and even Havelstock could not but admire the splendid ease with which poor Georgia accepted the situation.

After that the days went on very much as another. There were drives, boating, delightful flirtations, long days a-picnicing, when Havelstock read Tennyson to Ida Wynne under the cool shadows of forest-trees; there were croquet and billiards, dancing and promenades, in all of which Lexington and Georgia joined, apparently on exactly the right terms, really drifting further and further apart as the golden summer went on and away.

Then came the greatest event of Frank Havelstock's life—an episode that he marveled at as he never had marveled before; when he wondered until amazement was exhausted, how it had happened that he, the adamantine-hearted—he, the invulnerable—he, the pet of dozens of eligible girls, had succumbed, at once, hopelessly, to a poor, unknown girl, with a queenly air, a witching face, a pair of rarest brown eyes that kindled so at his coming.

He had met Ethel Maryl in a very unromantic matter-of-fact way, but her grace, her manner, had conquered him almost before some friend at the rustic croquet party had presented him.

Then had followed the race between him and young Leslie Verne, another suitor for the girl's hand; then had come those delicious three or four weeks of watching Ethel and learning how he swayed her with his merest word. And now, a month after he had been at Tanglewood, he had made up his mind to marry her—bright, peerless Ethel.

CHAPTER IX.

ETHEL

A SMALL, Gothic cottage, of light lavender color, with closely-shut green shutters, between whose slats occasionally shone a black, gloomy crepe weeper; with the wide front entrance closed against the joyous June sun, and brooding over the entire homestead the dismal shadow of the late visitation of the grim reaper.

Suggestively mournful as the outward appearance of the snug, homelike little place was, nearly all tokens of death's presence had vanished from within, especially in a large, airy bedroom at the head of the stairs, through whose partly open door one passing by could see Mrs. Lawrence, the six-week's widow, lolling in a wide easy chair, a novel lying on her lap, and on the little marble table near her a box of candy, with which she had evidently been trying to assuage her lonely grief.

She was faded with just sufficient reliefs to explain the irritation of manner in which she always indulged when speaking of other days when she was younger, and fresher, and fairer.

It was very bitter to Mrs. Lawrence to think other women could fascinate where she was overlooked. She could not accustom herself to the fact that she was hollow-eyed and bony and scanty haired—she who, at twenty, had been the praise of so many lips for her perfect beauty.

She had lost her taste in dressing, too, and persisted in adorning herself in attire only suitable to fresh, glowing girls. She wore her thin hair crepe over her wrinkled forehead, and never omitted the long curls of false hair that she thought "set off her style," as they

and Mrs. Lawrence fairly hated her; hated

hung limply over her sharp shoulder blades. She wore thin tissue dresses, and wondered why she was not as graceful as Ethel Maryl was, in her muslin wrapper, trimmed with linen braid.

Ethel Maryl! how she had hated and envied that girl from the moment she set her eyes upon her, five years ago, when she came a bride to Mr. Lawrence's cottage—a bride of thirty, who, like many another pretty, vain girl, had refused eligible offers in their halcyon days, in the fond hope and certainty of something grander, and then, in the end, had taken up with what they would have scorned a few years earlier.

Not that John Lawrence was to be scorned;

he was a thousand-fold nobler man than she was a woman, and his only fault was that he loved her, at the same time, the sober, staid, middle-aged widower, who asked Gertrude Fainham to be his wife, and a mother to his little adopted daughter, Ethel Maryl, whom he and his first wife had taken, in their childlessness, and loved as their own. Ethel's life had been one dream of happiness since she could remember. Her babyhood had been beyond her memory, and her earliest recollections were of herself and Mrs. Lawrence gathering flowers in the same dear old-fashioned garden, through which for nearly sixteen years she had walked daily.

She never had known a want, or a care,

She had had the carefullest training, physically,

morally, and intellectually.

Her foster-parents had given her every ad-

vantage of education, been lavishly liberal of money, so far as their means permitted, dressed her equally with any young girl around, and loved her rapturously.

Under such advantageous surroundings,

Ethel Maryl grew to be a most charming girl;

her natural disposition found full vent, her dainty, high-bred temperament met ample, appreciative sympathy; and added to her odd, piquant beauty, made her a splendid woman.

She was just eighteen now; with the rare

combination of gravity and joyous sweetness;

of a frank, spirited, sunshiny disposition,

truefrightful and honorable to a fault, quick

to make friends, capable of retaining them; proud

as a duchess, with an inbred scorn of meanness

and smallness, and a horror of fawning dependence,

that deepened and strengthened with every successive day of her life.

Her physical charms were in perfect accord

with her mental and moral attributes; and

Mrs. Lawrence's were not the only eyes that had been dazzled and enchanted, by her rare, graceful beauty.

She was very slightly under woman's medium size; not enough to suggest timeliness, but rather of a height and build that conveyed the idea of womanly dependence and pettiness.

She was inclined to slenderness, with exquisitely rounded limbs, and dazzlingly fair skin, with not the least vestige of color, except in her beautiful, scarlet lips.

Her eyes were intensely dark; large, of a hue of deepest, richest brown, with dark, heavy brows, and curling lashes. Then, to finish the portrait, precisely as an artist would have created the head of his ideal, was Ethel's hair; her splendid, surprising hair, of perfect golden hue. Not yellow; there was no hint of yellow in those long, waving tresses, but as vividly golden as if plunged in a bath of liquid sunshine.

The rare combination of dark eyes and golden hair, is peculiarly beautiful under any circumstances, but in Ethel Maryl, added to her other charms, it made her glorious.

And Mrs. Lawrence fairly hated her; hated

acknowledge, there has been no sentiment wasted between us."

"Papa!" sneered Mrs. Lawrence; "if you knew how disgustingly it sounded, when you are perfectly aware of the fact that he was no relation to you."

"He was my dearest earthly friend—a father in deed, word, and truth. I shall always speak of him as such. However, this has no bearing upon the subject you introduced."

"You are right. What I wish to say, once for all, is this:—that you have had from the Lawrence estate all you ever will have—and what you have cost, in education, in dress, in keeping, is a fortune in itself. Mr. Lawrence saw fit to make a lady of you, who may be, for all any one knows, the child of basest born people."

Ethel flushed at that—only a second, for her temper was as well under control as it was

"You display your ignorance of human laws when you say that, Mrs. Lawrence. You know I never could be the daughter of low, ignorant people, poor though they probably were, to have given me to strangers, if they did do so. You know I am a lady, Mrs. Lawrence, by instinct, by taste, by feeling."

She made her defense bravely, proudly, and although Mrs. Lawrence realized the girl as infinitely her superior, she could not resist the impulse to add a new thong to the scourge of her tormenting tongue.

"You certainly have no small estimate of yourself, Miss Ethel Maryl. Perhaps you consider yourself the daughter of a millionaire, the heiress of untold gold? Don't you really think now, you might, by some possibility, be—well, for example, Mr. Lexington's child, over there at Tanglewood?"

So fairly leered in Ethel's pale, contemptuous face.

"Or if you deride that modest idea, suppose you make up your mind to earn your undeniably right and title to wealth and position by marrying Mr. Leslie Verne? He is crazy after you, they say."

"Mrs. Lawrence?" and Ethel arose quietly, with a self-conscious hauteur that became her well, as her dark, bright eyes calmly met the widow's restless ones. "It can be but simply a matter of courtesy in me, which I unhesitatingly pay to my father's widow, regardless of the sentiments you have yourself inspired in me toward you, that I tell you I have no designs on Mr. Verne's heart. He is only a dear friend, and as such I suppose he will remain."

"A moment longer—since I shall not resume this subject again, and since on a week from to-day I expect you to vacate this place—I will advise you, since you declare you will not marry Mr. Verne, that you do not refuse Frank Havelstock—if he asks you."

A faint anger crept in Ethel's eyes, and she moved toward the door.

"I am safe in obeying the dictates of my own judgment, I assure you. Neither Mr. Verne, nor Mr. Havelstock will influence me in my decision to leave this house—not next week, but at once."

Mrs. Lawrence saw her leave the room, heard the gentle rustle of her skirts as she descended to the floor below, and smiled contentedly as she opened her novel, and helped herself to a chocolate caramel.

CHAPTER X.

A TRUE MAN'S LOVE.

ETHEL stopped in the lower hall just long enough to take her little straw hat from the rack, which she put on over her floating hair as she let herself out the front entrance.

She descended the steps of the veranda, and went down across the smooth-shaven lawn toward the road, where the large rustic gates were closed and locked.

She unfastened them, and then once out on the shaded path, with the flickering shadows falling over her bowed head, and the fresh crisp grass making cool paths for her hurrying feet, she slackened her pace, that was the result of her pent-up emotion, and went slowly, thoughtfully along, revolving over and over the sudden changes that had come into her young life.

She would be hard, in a degree, to leave the dear little cottage where plenty and content had reigned so many years—until the second Mrs. Lawrence came—where every article of furniture was like an old friend, and the big rose-bushes on the lawn border had grown with her, summer after summer.

Ethel remembered so well the day Mr. Lawrence had planted the pear trees, years and years before, and she had helped hold them with her wee, white hands while he shoveled in the rich dirt. It had been a moonlight night, and they three, Ethel and Mr. Lawrence and his wife, had laughed because they were sufficiently superstitious to plant them then, rather than in the matter-of-fact daytime.

Ethel could see the trees from where she was, in all their leafy panoply—tall, sturdy trees, with promise of a beautiful crop of luscious, golden skinned pears—that neither of the three who planted them would ever again eat.

And, when Ethel had supposed she was as deep-rooted for life as they, to be thus torn up, and cast adrift!

A little, fleeting look of wrath crossed her face, then vanished, leaving her full of high, strong, proud self-assurance.

"I would not wish to remain on sufferance even in papa's house; I would not remain even had he bade me, and know that Mrs. Lawrence despised me as she does. The world is

love her with a passion that shames my boyish affection into silence."

Havelstock's face wore an expression of deepest concern.

"I wonder where the trouble lies? Lexington, if Georgia should come to you, and ask you to forgive her, and beg for your love and favor, what would you do?"

It was his feeler, this question that would further decide his plans. He put it cautiously, with the air of a man who yearned to do his friend the favor suggested.

A perfect glory leaped to Lexington's eyes. "Can I ask me what I would do? Why, I would let her say all she would, because it would fairly intoxicate my senses to listen; and then I would take her in my arms and seal my pardon with kisses, and no one should ever come between us again."

His voice fairly trembled with eagerness. Havelstock felt a possibility, for the instant, of defeat, but he kept his ground well.

"You are the most generous man I ever knew. You love well, Lexington."

"Generous? You call an act of justice generous? You think you measure my love by an act like that? If you do, Frank, you haven't the remotest idea of how I worship my beautiful wife. Do you know, if I thought there was one chance in a thousand I'd cross that corridor to her room and go down on my knees to her and beseech her to love me?"

Lexington's splendid face was all aglow, and Havelstock had difficult work to effectually sustain his wrath, his fear.

"I admire such devotion; the woman is fortunate, indeed, who can inspire such. But, Lexington, I am sorry to feel it my duty to remind you of it; but you can hardly expect that, after years of silence, after the terrible way you wronged her regarding her first marriage, after the cur' way you announced your arrival, you could hardly expect a woman of Georgia's spirit to act other than she did. She is proud enough to resent what she regards an insult; and, Lexington, for the honor of the family name, for the sake of your peace of mind, don't allow her pride to exceed yours. Resent her insult to you, humble her if ever she gives you a chance, and, my word for it, when once she finds you are not the humble suppliant at her feet, she will yield readily. Is it possible you have made woman a study and do not know this?"

Lexington smiled faintly.

"I have not made woman my study, Frank, except Georgia. I have thought, at times, perhaps it would be the true way to win her, but—"

"It is the only way. I have studied woman closely, and I venture to wager the successful end of this war between you will depend upon your generalship."

"If I thought it—if I knew it," Lexington said, slowly.

"Granted you don't know, will you tell me what you hope to gain by going on in this way? I desire greatly to see you and your wife on the right terms. I will use all my influence on both of you to bring about the desirable consummation, for your sake particularly."

He was so in earnest, so kindly interested and Lexington trusted him implicitly.

"I feel that I need advice," he went on, just a little sadly, "and you are the one to give it. I want you to answer me one question—one question, Frank, as truly as you know how, regardless of the pain the answer may give me. Will you?"

Havelstock started in half suspicious alarm. What could Lexington mean?

"You may depend upon a truthful answer from me," he said, quietly.

"It is this—only this. Honestly, Frank, do you think Georgia cares for me—or—or—is her heart buried with her former husband, Carleton Vincy, the father of her little dead baby?"

Havelstock drew a long breath of positive relief; then, with a perfectly simulated shadow of pain on his face, averted it slightly, then, arose from his chair, and crossed the room, to the window, where he remained standing silently, with his back to his cousin.

The effect was produced precisely as Havelstock had hoped. His silence, his trying to hide his true feelings, made an impression of vague anguish on Lexington.

"Speak out, Frank; I know what you want to keep me from hearing—say it; I can stand it."

Then Havelstock turned sadly around.

"I would have given a thousand dollars had you left that question unasked. I promised my answer, and I am a man of truth, whatever pain the truth costs me. Lexington, I know Georgia has ceased to care for you. I had it from her lips not an hour ago. Do you wonder now at my advice? Oh, I dare not speak further. I can not, and Mrs. Lexington my hostess. Let me off, Lexington, I beg."

He seemed terribly agitated, but Lexington caught his arm, imperiously.

"What is it? probe deep, Frank; I will live to thank you yet."

His eyes fairly commanded the answer. His face was ashen, and there was a shadow of a great woe on his splendid mouth.

"She is coming to you, soon, to make false protestations of penitence and affection. I could hardly understand her, in my horror of her duplicity, but she hopes to gain some end she has in view. I think she intends to work on your one weak point, your passion for her—and then, to have her revenge at length. It sickens me, Lexington, I will not speak further."

He looked so pitifully, resolutely at the man whom he had so smitten.

Lexington bowed his grand head, and staggered heavily to the nearest chair, while Havelstock's eyes glared evilly on him.

He raised his face, presently, handsomely, haggard, proud and stony, as if hewn from marble.

"I thank you for placing me where I can defend myself. I am proud, Frank, and I shall not forget who reminded me of it. Let her come, I will meet her as she deserves. Will you go to your room now, and dress? There are some young people here who would be happy to have you join them at croquet, at five o'clock. I want to be alone, Frank, to accustom myself to regard Georgia as the false, designing creature I had learned her to be, from your lips, that I can trust, if no one else."

And Havelstock went to his room, content with his first move.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCORNED SACRIFICE.

THAT day at dinner, Havelstock was introduced to the guests at Tanglewood, by Mr. Lexington, making, as he fully intended to make, a favorable impression on every one of them, and being himself particularly pleased with Ida Wynne, whose arch, merry eyes met his at the first glance, with a word of wonderment in their depths.

He was tenfold handsomer than his picture; and she noticed at the very first look she gave

him, how perfectly he was dressed, how courteous and unobtrusive his elegant manner was; and, with a half shy glance at Georgia, thought the chances had increased, that, possibly, this was her fate.

Not that she was unwomanly, or reckless in her unbounded admiration of the man whose Spanish eyes had haunted her in his picture, ever since she and the other girls had seen it in the album; only, she was an impressive, ardent, heart-whole girl, and Frank Havelstock, with her prejudices in his favor, beforehand, was a shrewd, gallant, lady's man, who had learned to perfection, his art of captivating hearts.

They were a merry party that played croquet, or danced in the parlor, or promenaded in the park, that sweet summer night. Mr. Lexington was in a new mood, since his interview with Frank, and he had come down to dinner, firmly decided as to the course he intended to pursue. And that was, not to let Georgia imagine, for a moment longer, that the refusal of her love had power to make him miserable. So he laughed and talked, now with one, now with another; he played chess with Mrs. Hammond for his partner, turned the pages while Miss Reynolda played an opera, and then, when Ida Wynne declared Mr. Havelstock should give them the music for a redowa, he went over to Georgia, who was quietly chatting with Mr. Hammond, and asked her to dance with him, with as much elaborate, hollow-hearted politeness as the stranger of half an hour's acquaintance would have solicited the honor.

A second of dizzy, rapturous delight, when her eyes glanced timidly in his, that were raised in courteous expectation, and Georgia gave him her hand, warm, trembling. He felt the slight thrill in her fingers, as he closed his eyes, indifferently, over them; he noticed the dainty shrinking, for a second, of her form as his arm touched her waist, and he thought, bitterly, what a deep woman she was, thus to preface her later dramatic performances with these little touches that she intended, doubtless, should strengthen her position.

While Georgia, trembling with ecstasy, excused him for not pressing her hand, or resting his arm more familiarly around her waist, because she had been so cruel, so cruel to him, when once she finds you are not the humble suppliant at her feet, she will yield readily. Is it possible you have made woman a study and do not know this?"

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"Georgia—"

All he said was the one word, her name, but the tone struck the deadliest chill to her heart. Was it among the possibilities that he would deny her? The thought agonized her—this woman, who had endured silently for years and years; this woman to whom her husband's love was her very existence, late as the revelation had come.

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graceful figure clad in somber black—and then strong hands closed upon the brush shanty, tearing it apart, flinging the poles, the brush in a pile into which several blazing torches were thrust.

Such was the scene that met the startled gaze of Old Business as he paused upon the hill-crest.

"The devil's to pay now, shore enough!" he muttered, a shade of indecision settling upon his brow. "Them's Windy Gapers—I kin make out Pacific Pete an' that Eli Brand, as he calls himself. They're just more'n red-hot—what in thunder kin be up, anyhow? They mean business—that's plain, an' I reckon it's jest as well we wasn't none o' us to home when they called. Shouldn't wonder if the Devil's to pay now, shore enough!"

Eli Brand had sprung upon a convenient boulder, and in a loud voice commanded attention. The wild tumult was in a measure quelled, and the rough crowd gathered around as though eager to hear the promised speech.

"Gentlemen—one word with you. Some of you asked for proof. That was well enough. It is always best to be sure we are right, in such cases. Look around you—is there not proof enough before your eyes? These men were here this morning—where are they now? Gone—ay! and in such haste that they have left their tools behind them! That is proof enough to convict a thousand, I can—"

"Lie like the devil—I don't know what you're talkin' bout, Eli Brand—since that's the name you go by jest now—but I know you're tellin' a dog-gone double an' twisted lie!"

Eli Brand stared in open-mouthed amazement at this uncemonious interruption, and despite his being surrounded by a strong force of ruffians, he visibly quailed as he recognized in the audacious speaker, Old Business.

The old hunter had rapidly descended the hillside, and paused within two-score yards of the excited crowd. Leaning carelessly against a boulder that guarded all save his head and shoulders, his rifle resting before him, ready for instant use, Old Business gazed placidly down upon the mob of Windy Gapers. The glow of the bonfire clearly revealed him to the angry eyes below, and a wild yell of execration followed his recognition.

"Kill him—cut his heart out—put him in the fire an' roast 'im on tel' his fesses!"

Such were a few of the fierce exclamations that followed the characteristic speech of Old Business, but he never flinched before the storm, nor even seemed to notice it, except by loosening a revolver.

"Easy, there, boys—kinder easy! 'Tain't healthy to git so awful red-hot—you're bound to ketch cold arterwards. You little cuss in the ragged shirt—drap that weepin'! Don't ye got no manners a-tall? D'y want me to plug ye?"

Old Business flung forward his rifle, and it seemed as though a tragedy must inevitably follow. Doubtless such would have been the case only for the prompt interference of Pacific Pete, who boldly sprang between the levelled weapons before either could be discharged.

"Stand back, Barton—and you, old man, if you really value your life, you will be a little less hasty. Please remember that we hold the winning hand just now, and govern yourself accordingly. You understand?"

"I've heard you talk afore to-day, laddy-buck. I hold better keerdys than you think, mebbe. But go on with your camp-meetin'. Let's hear what all this rumpus is about, anyhow; time enough fer our little game afterward."

"You really pretend not to know what we are after here?" cried Pacific Pete, and if his surprise was not genuine, it proved him an admirable actor.

"I ain't one o' the pretendin' sort. Old Business is my name, an' business is my natur', too, chuck up; you hear me talk?" If I knew what you war after, I wouldn't ax. You're tryin' some sort o' skin-game, but that's all I do know."

"What have you done with Miss Edna Brand—where have you hidden her? you and your comrades in crime?" sharply cried Pacific Pete.

For a moment Old Business stood like one petrified, his mouth and eyes wide open. He could scarce believe his ears. Like many a better organized court, the mob of Windy Gapers misinterpreted his surprise, and believed it conscious guilt. Again their wild yell filled the air, sounding along the valleys, reverberating from point to point—the deadly, merciless cry for blood.

"Help on, ye 'tarnal screech-owls o' perdition—ye two-legged, bob-tailed curs o' the free-lunch route—squel on until ye split your muzzles an' bust yer blisters! It's on'y one man you're skygullin' at, but he's a whale on crutches—he's a two-legged pepper-box; one smell at 'im, and you'll sneeze tell you blow your brains out! Them's me—little Old Business in a minnit—you bet!"

"Mount 'im! why don't ye just climb 'im?" yelled Barton, a little, ragged miner, whose courage decidedly shamed that of some of his larger comrades, only Pacific Pete held his revolver hand, firmly.

"Mount me—the contumacious mule o' the Rockies, the covariant jackrabbit, the green-tailed squeegee, who was foaled by a yairthquake, an' sired by old Harry Cane, himself! Whar's the man so ovadocious, the two men, the half dozen or more two-legged bedbugs as dar' tem to ride me?"

"The galoot is clean gone crazy!" cried one of the crowd, disgustedly.

"Pent, sinner, 'pent!' twanged forth Old Business, who, though, still holding himself in readiness to play the part of a man, if worst came to worst, knew full well that the first shot or blow dealt, would undoubtedly preve his death-warrant. "Pent, sinner, 'pent! You's gwine on the lightnin'—sp'ress to the devil, whar they feed ye on blillin' brimstone with scoop-shovels. Now's your chance; this is the 'cepted time. You, Hank Hurley, drap that; drap it, I tell ye, or I'll send ye bug-huntin'!"

"Hold peace, I say; I command it!" screamed Pacific Pete, leaping upon a boulder, and drawing a revolver. "I'm running this institution just now, and I tell you, the first man that burns a grain of powder, or strikes a blow until I give the word, had better say his prayers beforehand, for I'll kill him, if it's the last act of my life!"

"Good enough, boss. I didn't think you'd go back on a' old pard, when the pinch kem, no, I didn't," coolly observed Old Business, with a broad grin.

"My advice to you, old man, is to put a bridle on your tongue, and not bray so loud. It's bad for the health—just now in particular. You understand me?"

"I thought, banty, if you'd speak plainer, I reckon you've got me a little mixed up 'ith some other feller. I'm a powerful exhorter, when my bellers is fresh filed up, an' when I come to 'late my 'speriance—that's whar I

makes the wool fly. F'r instance; fifteen y'ar ago, more or less, in Saint Louey—"

"Enough; drop that nonsense, or by all that's good! I'll give the word to tear the chattering tongue from your jaws! We haven't come here for idle talk; we mean business. Come down here and answer our questions. If you can prove your innocence, you shall not be harmed—I give you my word of honor."

"Stake's too big for the security, boss," chuckled Old Business, with an audacity that made Big Tom Noxon stare aghast. "If it's all the same to the honorable company, this coon 'll keep his posh, jest whar he is. Now, go on with your rat-killin'!"

"You'll not gain anything by being insolent, let me tell you, old man. But have your way. We can reach you as easily where you are, if need be. Eli Brand, state your case."

Brand stepped forward, and some of the men flung fresh brushwood upon the fire, so that the bright glow plainly revealed the peculiar scene.

"I accuse this man, and his confederates—Mark Austin, and Lafe Pike—of abducting my daughter, Edna Brand!" distinctly uttered the man, and a sullen roar of angry vengeance came from the crowd, deadly and vindictive enough to have cowed many a bold heart; but Old Business didn't change countenance, as he replied:

"Eli Brand, you lie wuss than you did in the year '50, when Gospel Dick was—found. But go on. Let's hear the rest on it; then I'll speak."

"Frank Hurley is my witness," muttered Brand in a hoarse, strained voice, as he slunk back from the fire.

"Speak up, man, and tell what you know about it," sharply cried Pacific Pete, as the dark-browed ruffian advanced.

"It's short an' sweet, boss. Hellow, Black Jack, whar'd you come from?" he cried, as that worthy put in an appearance, having, like Old Business, been attracted thither by the tumult. "But I was sayin'; this evenin', I was out takin' a walk for my health. Fact is, I'd bin drunker'n a biled owl, the night afore—"

"Stick to the text; cut it short, friend," cried Pacific Pete.

"Edzactly. I was walkin' on the hill, north o' town, when I sighted the lady, Miss Brand. At that minnit, when I was lookin' at her, three ornary galoots lepped out o' the brush an' corralled her. I give' a yell, an' made for 'em, but like a fool, I'd left my weepins at the shanty, while they was well heeled. They burned some powder; spiled my hat, hyar, any how; an' knowin' they over-held me, I cut for town, a'ter help."

"You say I was with 'em, smarty?"

"Yes, you an' Gentleman Mark, an' Long Pike. I kin take my Bible oath on it!" declared Hurley.

"Bout what time was this?"

"Just afore sundown. But I didn't come hyar to answer your questions, old snoozer!"

"I reckon you've answered enough. You kin squat down, pretty. You, Black Jack, stan' up there; you're my witness. Stan' up thar, unless you want some more jim-jams. Now, you tell these gentlemen that we three men, as you accuse o' gal-stealin', was right that in that shanty, until full sunset. You know it. You was watchin' us from the top o' that rock yerder. Speak out."

"It's a darned lie; I wasn't!" muttered Black Jack. "But s'posin' I was! you killed Devil Frank, anyhow, an' right hyar's whar you planted his karkidge!"

This fierce announcement was the last straw. The mob burst all bonds then. Yelling, and screaming, they made a mad rush toward Old Business. But he was no less quick. Crack, crack! his revolver quickly followed the report of his rifle, and Black Jack uttered a horrible yell of agony as he fell back, shot dead, and beside him quivered Hank Hurley, the foreworn witness, a bullet through his heart.

With a taunting laugh, Old Business fled up the hill, closely followed by the yelling, infuriated mob, whose pistols popped at every step.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RACE FOR HIGH STAKES.

"Now, legs, do your duty; them fellers mean business, you bet!"

These words broke almost unconsciously from the lips of Old Business, as he momentarily paused upon the crest of the hill, and glanced keenly back toward Dick's Pocket.

The blazing brush-light cast its lurid light over the scene. Over the picturesque rocks and crags, over the two blood-stained bodies lying there so still and motionless, their pain-distorted features rendered doubly repulsive by the flickering shadows, and ruddy glow of the firelight. Over the swarm of yelling, cursing, infuriated men, as they scramble up the steep hillside, their progress marked by the quick puffs of flame-tinted smoke. And the sharp reports of firearms rattle and reverberate from point to point—the deadly, merciless cry for blood.

One man fleeing from full two score; one man fighting for life and liberty; two score men thirthing for his blood.

Truly, it is a race for high stakes.

In that swift, backward glance, Old Business read enough for his purpose. He laughed half scornfully, as a bullet whistled past his ear, with that peculiar ragged hum imparted to a bit of soft lead, when forced through a deep-grooved bore. Knowing right well, how very few are the men capable of shooting by moonlight, even at a stationary target, he felt little fear of being picked off, unless by a chance shot. Fleetness of foot, skillful dodging and dexterous must decide the race.

Despite the odds against him, Old Business was perfectly cool and collected. No man knew better than he how essential it was for him to "keep his head"—to take advantage of every point, to decide on the instant and execute promptly.

After that one rapid but comprehensive glance, the fugitive turned abruptly to the right, running lightly down the ridge, dodging round bowlders and trees, leaping over holes and bushes, running in silence, with an ease and smoothness, as it were, vastly different from the yelling, panting mob behind him.

He followed the ridge for quite half a mile. His pursuers were by this time pretty well strung out in his rear, though several were close at his heels. Since making that abrupt turn Old Business had headed direct for Windy Gap, but he smiled grimly as he read airtight the exultant yell of his pursuers. He had no intention of running into a trap—not he.

Putting on a spurt, Old Business darted ahead at a terrific rate, descending the slight slope at breakneck speed. This slope, together with a corresponding rise, near a hundred yards beyond, had given the ridge its name, "Swayback."

When he reached the lowest point of the depression, Old Business sprung rapidly aside and prostrated himself beneath a clump of bushes, trusting to remain unobserved in the deep shadow.

One after another his pursuers came dashing down the slope, their worst passions fully

aroused by the protracted race. One by one they passed by the covert of the panting fugitive and darted up the incline, doubtless fancying some of the fantastical shadows beyond was their anticipated victim, instead of the weird creations of the moonlight shimmering through the redwood and cedar trees.

"Go it, ye sinners," muttered Old Business. "A look at the back is the best part o' each or'ney cutters as you—glory to Moses! sweet Cornelia!"

A man, who was descending the slope with more speed than prudence, lost control of himself, and "left his feet," in more than one sense, when nearly opposite the clump of bushes behind which the old hunter lay.

Tripping, he plunged heavily forward, much as a diver takes a "header" and crashed through the clump of bushes, alighting fairly on the back of Old Business. Two of the miners who had been close behind the unfortunate fellow yelled out something as they passed by, but did not stop, evidently fearing to lose time, lest they should also lose the chance of being in at the death.

For a moment or two Old Business was confused and half-stunned. The blundering miner had fallen heavily upon him, driving his head forward into the soft earth, filling both eyes and mouth. Rebounding, the miner had rolled off several feet, and was now trying to yell, curse and regain his breath at one and the same time.

This curious combination of sounds, more than aught else, restored Old Business' cool decision. Fearing that some of the straggling pursuers would pause to investigate the cause of the uproar, he scrambled forward and knelt aside the kicking, squirming figure, clutching his neck with both hands, his sinewy fingers abruptly checking the spluttering yell and curses.

"Shut up, ye sneaky reptile!" gritted Old Business, retaining his seat despite the convulsive kickings and struggles of the blundering miner. "Don't ye got no more manners than to make such a dog gone ovadocious run-puss 'bout nothin'? D'y want to 'larn the hull kentry—bring out the fire-engines an' wake up the plice? Shut up—I'll squeeze ye into the middle o' next week! Ye won't, eh? I reckoned y'd better—yas, I do so!"

Old Business compressed his fingers with all his power, and lay motionless as a log on top of his luckless captive, for he heard more of his pursuers plunging down the hillside. It was a critical moment, but fortunately the captive was choked into submission, if not insensibility, and the heavy footed miners passed by, unsuspecting how narrowly they were missing their prey.

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Old Business lost no time in dragging his prisoner back to the clump of bushes, and when once there, relaxed his fierce grip in time to avoid murdering the man, though still in readiness to cut short any attempt at an alarm.

"It's you, is it, banty?" he muttered, peering keenly into the miner's face. "The little cuss Pacific Pete called Barton. You wanted to shoot me back that, too, didn't ye? Wa'al, I've got ye now. What shall I do wi' ye? What'd ye do ef you was in my place?"

"I'll blow your brains out—through—that'd be too good a death for a 'n' ar'ny gal-stealer like you," growled little Barton, whose courage was by no means to be measured by his body.

"Jes' se—ef I was that critter. But I ain't, pard—no. I ain't got so low, quite. You needn't b'lieve me—I don't s'pose ye would, even ef I was to sw'rt to it—but this hull business is a put-up job on us fellers, by Pacific Pete and that Brand feller, 'cause they think we know'd too much for the good o' thar health. You'll find'em out afore long. Mebbe it'll larn you a lesson not to b'lieve what every fool says—"

"I don't—so you ought as well cheese it."

"You're sharp—sharp as soft soap, an' twic'e as nasty! Twouldn't be safe for you to run 'round loose. Fer the good o' mankind, reckon I'd better put a muzzle on ye. Don't like to—no, I don't. You'll get mad, mebbe, an' curse me. That'd hurt my feelin's powerful. Speck I'd go into collapse."

While talking Old Business was not idle. He knew that his ruse might be discovered at any moment, when the crowd would probably take the back track, or else scatter and search the range thoroughly in hopes of stumbling upon his hiding place or across his trail. Rapid flight, then, would be his best safeguard. But first Barton must be disposed of. At no time a bloodthirsty man, Old Business would have risked his life twice over rather than injure his captive, whose bold words had strongly interested him.

"I'm sorry, but it can't be helped," he muttered quietly, as with his knife he unceremoniously cut several strips from the miner's dilapidated breeches. "Your rig is a good summer suit—light an' airy; it's a pity to spoil 'em. But what kin I do? Ye see, I'm 'vited to a big-bug ball, an' won't do fer me to spoil my dress suit. Thar—open your mouth—I don't want to squeeze ye, but ef I must—so! Don't it taste nice? Waa!, that's your fault—should wash 'em ofener. However, d'it healthy—jest think o' that an' twen'taste hafe so bad. Thar! you're fixed up suiptious, ef I do say it. You're a lucky cuss, you be! Jes' think! All you've got to do is to lay hyar, like a bump on a log, ontel you git tired—an' as much longer as you like. You don't hav to work, nur to drink, nur eat, nur do nuttin' but lay still an' do nuttin'. Mebbe I'll call on ye, in a week or so, ef I don't fert it. Ef I should, you jist holler an' let me know."

Leaving Barton bound, gagged, and perfectly helpless, Old Business picked up his weapons and glided silently down the hill. He felt no compunctions at leaving his captive in this way, knowing full well that some of his friends would assuredly find and release him, when they came to search for the lost trail by daylight.

After breaking his trail thoroughly in the creek, Old Business lit out for the appointed rendezvous at his best gait, knowing that Pike and Mark would be uneasy at his long delay. Indistinct mutterings fell from his lips; vague allusions to Pacific Pete, Eli Brand and Edna—and he seemed greatly troubled. Little wonder. Were this false accusation generally believed, that section of the country would be made too hot for them. Only speedy flight could save them—capture meant a sudden and ignominious death.

The night was far spent when Old Business reached the rendezvous, and his signal was promptly responded to. But what was his astonishment when Lafe Pike alone greeted him. Where was Mark?

"Don't know," replied Pike. "Hain't see'd hair nor hide o' him since we left the shanty. He hain't bin hyar—that's sartin. I hed the shortest trail, an' he couldn't a' out-traveled me. Ef hed a' come, I'd a' hearn him. Mebbe he mistook the place!"

"Tain't

'THE EVERGREEN.'

BY EDWARD G. PINCKNEY.

The roses, with their sweet perfume,
May claim to be most fair;
But ah! their beauty fair, as soon
As touched by autumn air,
So give to me the "Evergreen,"
Whose beauty is forever seen.

The violet and buttercup,
When clothed with sparkling dew,
May call the humming-bird to sup
On gold or dainty blue,
But give to me the "Evergreen,"
Whose beauty is forever seen.

The water-lily fair to see
Residing in the stream,
Robed with its spotless purity,
May be the flowers' queen,
But give to me the "Evergreen,"
Whose beauty is forever seen.

The pansy, or the daisy white,
With grace and beauty rare,
In modesty may charm the sight,
And rank among the fair,
But give to me the "Evergreen,"
Whose beauty is forever seen.

All flowers that the earth has brought
With them to the grave,
And though each is with beauty fraught
Their beauty fades away;
So give to me the "Evergreen,"
Whose beauty is forever seen.

The Dead Traveler.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

THE train stopped at Dexham's bleak depot long enough to permit a man to spring from the drizzling gloom upon the platform of the through coach, whose doors were locked. The conductor, ensconced from the rain in the express car, did not see the new acquisition to his list of passengers, and the man standing on the platform seemed to be congratulating himself on the success of what he wished to call secrecy.

When the train moved from the station, whose night-clerk slept in his dimly-lighted office, the unknown passenger quietly drew a brass key from his pocket and unlocked the door of the coach. When he closed it again, himself inside, it was locked as before.

He found the car lighted by three lamps, and seemingly deserted. Not a head protruded above the seats, and the air of desolation filled the place. He heard the rain now falling in earnest, beating against the windows, beyond whose panes the blackness of darkness reigned.

Not far from the fireless stove the new passenger seated himself, and began to brush his hat with a handkerchief. He was in the midst of his work when something like a groan startled him, and he stopped. Leaning forward, he listened keenly, and at length rose and walked down the aisle.

He seemed satisfied that he had heard a human groan, for he looked into and between the seats, and it was near the forward door that he suddenly came to a halt.

He stood over a man whose head rested on the crimson cushion of the seat, but whose body lay on the floor.

From the white lips beneath the silent spectator had proceeded the startling groan, and the eyes moved once when they caught sight of him.

The unknown passenger regarded the scene for a moment before he stirred a limb. Then he bent over the recumbent man, and with no difficulty assisted him to the seat.

"I say it's no use after your murderous blows!" said the stricken one, seeming to regard the new passenger as his mortal enemy. "You need not strike me again."

"I never struck you," replied the passenger, with a faint smile. "My kind sir, you have mistaken the person. Will you not tell me how all this came about?"

It was quite evident that the wounded traveler was near unto death. One quiver after another passed over his frame, and once or twice after speaking he gasped for breath. The single spectator saw this and put his hand on his shoulder.

"I will avenge you!" he said, stooping over the dying traveler. "Tell me who did it; I am a detective."

The deathly eyes fixed their stare upon him, and when he saw the white lips move he put his ear down to them.

"Tell Natalie—Natalie—tell her that—God pity me!"

With the last word the traveler's head fell back upon the detective's hand, and the gurgle of death ran up his throat. Then he turned his face from the light, and the rain-drops that came through a hole in the pane fell upon a dead man's brow.

"Curse the stupid luck!" said the detective, standing erect. "He would have told me, I am sure, and my case would not have been difficult. But let me see what I can find upon him by which to work, for I swear I will hunt the death of the man who killed the traveler."

An examination of the dead man's pockets revealed nothing concerning his identity, and the detective looked puzzled. He found an empty pocket-book and a watch; but they did him no good. The man had probably reached his thirtieth year; his hair and well-dressed beard were light, and his lifeless eyes a beautiful blue. He was well dressed, but there was no show of ostentation about his garments.

After the search the detective unlocked the front door of the coach, and with another key which he drew from his pocket unlocked the express car. Stepping boldly into it, he started the messenger, whose hands flew to an inner pocket when he beheld the unsmoked intruder, but no pistol was drawn.

"No shooting, Tobe," said the detective, and the messenger recognizing the voice, came forward with extended hands.

"You take a fellow by surprise, Dixon. I might have shot you."

"Oh, I guess not!" laughed the detective; "where's Golden?"

"Asleep in yon corner."

Dixon stepped forward, and waked a good-looking man, who had fallen asleep on several bales of gunnycloth.

"You've got a dead man on the train," Dixon said to the conductor, when he opened his eyes.

"A dead man!" cried the express messenger, before the conductor, recovering from his sleep, could utter a single ejaculation.

"A man as dead as Cheseal! Come and see him."

The messenger picked up a lantern, and the two left the car.

"I recollect him," said conductor Golden, looking at the dead traveler. "He boarded the train at Monterey, and was my only passenger. There're two stabs in his left breast! You've noticed them, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; nothing ever escapes me," replied the detective, with a smile. "Do not either of you gentlemen know aught about him?"

The messenger shook his head without replying, and the conductor said:

"I've met him once or twice before. I

think his name is Hardesty. Concerning his home or his people, I know nothing."

A few minutes later, on some sacks stretched on the floor of the express-car, lay the dead traveler. The lamplight fell over his pale face and rendered it ghastly, like the faces of corpses.

Conductor Golden said that the mystery of the passenger's death puzzled him. He was sure that no other person tenanted the fatal coach when he locked it, after taking up the only through ticket, and giving the proper check. The theory of suicide was discussed, but abandoned, as no weapons were found on the passenger's person. The messenger recited a certain robbery of the company's car works several years prior to the fatal night, and stated that a number of coach keys were then taken. In all probability some person in possession of one of those keys had entered the coach at some station, murdered the unknown passenger while the train was in motion, and made good his escape.

This theory satisfied messenger and conductor, but not the detective.

"Gentlemen," he said, calmly, "this man was killed by an old enemy. His watch, worth at least two hundred dollars, remains on his person, but everything else has been removed. The murderer has carefully removed all traces of his identity, but his shrewdness shall avail him naught. For I tell you," the speaker's cold and piercing eyes were fixed on Golden, "I tell you," he repeated, "that I will hunt him down and make him pay dearly for his terrible work."

"Your hand on that!" said the conductor, putting forth his hand, and the men clasped.

"Why, there's blood on your hand!" suddenly said Dixon, noting a crimson spot on Golden's member. "I've a mind to arrest you," he added, with a smile.

"Do so, and hunt no further for your man!" returned the conductor. "I had my hand in the dead man's bosom, hence the gore on my skin. But do you think you'll ever catch the perpetrator of the deed?"

"Catch him!" cried Dixon. "In my detective life I have never followed a man in vain. John Golden, you have heard of me in the capacity of a man-hunter, and I promise that you shall be present at the death of your passenger's assassin."

"Good! I accept the invitation implied in your words; and Tobe—is he included?"

"Certainly," answered Dixon, with a faint smile, and then the conversation was interrupted by the whistle of the engine.

"We're running into Dayton," said the messenger, taking up his book. "I put off a parcel here that is not entered on the books," and he glanced from the detective to the corpse.

The coroner's inquest elicited no new facts concerning the dead passenger. The usual verdict that "the deceased had come to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown to the jury" appeared in the morning papers. During the day many people viewed the corpse in the coroner's office; but it was not recognized.

Dixon, the detective, kept about the office the entire day. He scrutinized the face of each viewer of the corpse, and assisted to put the dead into the coffin after office hours. Many people wondered who that strange and commonplace man in the office was, never dreaming that he was one of the keenest detectives in the United States. He left the office at eleven o'clock and passed under the gaslight toward the Merchants' Hotel. This resort was in a distant part of the city, and to gain it the detective would be obliged to traverse a portion of the metropolis infested with thieves, gamblers, debauchees, and wicked people generally. He had traversed it before, unarmed, and did not fear its denizens.

He set forth alone, and had gained the nearest and best portion of the infected district, when a hand was laid on his arm. He stopped and beheld a young girl looking up into his face.

"Well, Miss?" he said, in a tone that reassured the person, for she came nearer.

"I saw you in the coroner's office; but I was afraid to come in," she said. "I looked in from the curb, and ran off when I thought you were looking at me. Sir, I would like to see him before they give him an unknown grave. He was my brother."

Dixon started and turned full upon the pale, sorrowful girl.

"Your brother?" he cried. "What is your name?"

"Natalie Green."

It was the last name pronounced by the murdered traveler; and the detective was startled at finding its possessor so soon.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"In a house two blocks down this street. Oh, sir, do not think me one of the sinning. I am not. I drew me from home, and I had not the hardihood to return. I could not face father, though I have not fallen, and brother George, the dead, has been hunting me ever since."

"Natalie, this is no place for conversation," said the detective. "In your home you must tell me the whole story. You know what I am, girl?"

"Yes, a detective," she replied. "They don't like such as you in these parts."

"I reckon not," he said, with a smile, and together they walked down the street.

What followed I need not detail here; the denouement of my story will tell the reader.

One autumn night, three months later, a man boarded a train as it was leaving a country station.

The night was the counterpart of the one that witnessed the finding of the dying passenger in the coach, and the person who had nimbly leaped upon the platform unlocked the car with the sang froid of a privileged person.

He passed through the well-filled coach, and presently faced the messenger, who was at cards with the conductor. Both men started when they beheld the new-comer; but they soon recognized him and gave him a friendly hand.

"No man yet," said Conductor Golden, with a light laugh, as he looked up into their visitor's face. "The trail is long, and will in time, no doubt, grow tiresome."

"But I have reached the end of it!" said the detective, seriously, and the conductor rose to his feet.

"It was no spirit, you see, that was rapping last night, Miss Hughes," said Mrs. Moodie, impatiently: "for all of the stupid old holes I ever saw, this is the worst! I wouldn't be paid to stay here—no, not if you were to make me president to-morrow for it."

"No such inducement is likely to be offered, Miss Lawless. Your presence here, I can assure you, is not coveted. Miss Sharpe, take this young lady to one of the spare rooms, and remain there to watch her until her father comes and removes her. Young ladies, you will now resume your studies as usual."

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Tobe, we will drink to Dixon's success."

"You must drink soon, then," was the reply; and a revolver quietly slipped from the detective's pocket.

"John Golden," he continued, "I arrest you for the murder of George Green. You allured his sister, Natalie, from her home, and swore to kill him because he followed you. That vow you have kept; you met him in your through coach; the night was dark, and he your sole passenger. Then and there you imbruted your hands with blood, and removed from his person traces of his identity."

Deny

not the charges, for I am prepared to prove each and every one! Tobe, there are a brace of handcuffs in my pocket."

The astonished messenger moved toward the detective, when with a cry of horror the conductor leaped to the half open express door.

Dixon sprang forward to arrest him, but was too late.

The train struck a bridge as the form of the conductor disappeared, and messenger and detective gazed blankly into each other's faces.

"Dead?" asked Nixon.

"Dead!" responded Tobe. "If he missed the beams he fell into the river eighty feet below us."

"Well, let him go!" said the detective. "He is the assassin of the man from whose home he allured a sister."

The body of John Golden was never found.

Among his papers at his boarding-house in the city was found a memorandum book belonging to George Green, and other articles that Natalie identified.

Thus was the mystery that hung over the dead traveler cleared, and I have but to add that Natalie returned home, and after the lapse of two years, became the wife of no less a person than Jerome Dixon.

THREE PAIRS AND ONE.

From the German of Ruckert.

BY HAP HAZARD

Two ears hast thou and mouth but one;

But wherefore murmur, pray?

For much to hear it doth beseech,

And little of it say.

Two eyes hast thou and mouth but one;

Import heed well thou,

For, many things 'tis meet to see,

And little of them tell.

Two eyes hast thou and mouth but one;

To wear it is 'tis meet;

For, plainly, two were more to work,

And only one to eat!

Erminie:

OR,
THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-

FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

PET FINISHES HER EDUCATION.

And her brow cleared, but not her dauntless eye;

The wind was down, but still the sea ran high."

—DON JUAN

ACCUSTOMED to early rising from her infancy, the first beam of morning sunshine found

her out of bed, and dressed.

The other girls, with Miss Sharpe, were up, too, hastily throwing on their clothes, and looking pale, haggard and worn, from the previous night's excitement and want of sleep.

Quivering with the remembrance of last night's frolic, and the terror and consternation that would follow it to-day, Pet stood before the mirror, bathing her hands and face, and curling her short, boyish black ringlets.

The others did not wait for this, but as soon as they were dressed made a grand rush for the lower rooms, where they knew the remainder of the household were assembled. And here they found them, still in their night-robes, just beginning to find their tongues, and venturing to talk over the exciting events of the previous night. Petronilla, with her keen sense of the ludicrous, had much ado to keep from laughing outright at their wild eyes and affrighted whispers, but drawing her face down to the length of the rest, she talked away as volubly as any of them of her terror and wonder, protesting she would write to her paper to take her home, for that she wasn't accustomed to living in haunted houses. At last, becoming aware of their *deshabilles*, the young ladies decamped up-stairs to don more becoming garments, and talk over, in the privacy of their own apartments, the ghost and the mysterious rappings.

Mrs. Moodie, recovering her presence of mind and dignity, with the coming of daylight, resolved to lose no time in having the matter fully investigated. Her first act was to put the house searched from top to bottom, and the young ladies willingly engaging in the search, every corner, cranny and crevice, from attic to cellar, was thoroughly examined. Had a needle been lost it must have been found, but no trace of last night's visitor could be discovered.

"Oh, it's no use looking; it was a ghost!" exclaimed Miss Sharpe.

as long and as loud as she can, I reckon. An old blue pitcher! Humph! Wish to gracious bed had smashed the whole set, and made one job of it."

By this time they had reached the playground; and making her way through the crowd, Pet marched resolutely up to Miss Sharpe, and confronted that lady with an expression as severe as though she were about to have her arrested for high treason.

"Miss Sharpe, look here!" she began. "I've been up-stairs and smashed an old blue pitcher. There!"

"What?" said Miss Sharpe, knitting her brows, and rather at a loss.

"Miss Lawless was in the children's dormitory, Miss Sharpe," explained the girl who had been Pet's guide, "and she accidentally broke one of the pitchers. She could not help it, I assure you."

"But I know she could help it," screamed Miss Sharpe. "She has done it on purpose, just to provoke me. Oh, you little limb you!—you unbearable little mischief-maker! You deserve to be whipped till you can't stand."

"See here, Miss Sharpe; you'll be hoarse pretty soon, if you keep screaming that way," said Pet, calmly.

"I'll go and tell Mrs. Moodie. I'll go this minute. Such conduct as this, you'll see, will not be tolerated here," shrieked the exasperated lady, shaking her fist furiously at Pet.

"Mrs. Moodie has gone out," said one of the girls.

"Then I'll tell her to-morrow. I'll—"

Here the loud ringing of a bell put a stop to further declamation, and the girls all flew, flocking in, and marched, two by two, into another large room, where a long supper-table was laid out.

It was almost dark when the evening meal was over. Then the larger girls dispersed themselves to their various avocations, and the younger ones, under the care of a gentler monitor than Miss Sharpe, raced about the long halls and passages, and up and down stairs.

Now was the time Pet had been waiting for. Gliding, unobserved, up-stairs, she entered the dormitory, and securing one end of the string to the bed-post, let the remainder drop out of the window. Then returning down-stairs, she passed unnoticed through the front hall, and finally secured the other end of the string to the knocker of the door. It was too dark, as she knew, for any one to observe the cord in opening the door.

This done, she returned to her companions, all aglow with delight at her success so far; and instigated by her, the din and uproar soon grew perfectly unbearable, and the whole phalanx were ordered off to bed half an hour earlier than usual, to get rid of the noise.

As Judge Lawless had said, it was a rigidly strict establishment; and the rule was that, at half-past nine, every light should be extinguished, and all should be safely tucked up in bed. Even Mrs. Moodie herself was no exception to this rule; for, either thinking example better than precept, or being fond of sleeping, ten o'clock always found her in the arms of Morphæus.

Therefore, at ten o'clock, silence, and darkness, and slumber, hung over the establishment of Mrs. Moodie. In the children's dormitory, nestling in their white-draped beds, the little tired pupils were sleeping the calm, quiet sleep of childhood, undisturbed by feverish thoughts or gloomy forebodings of the morrow. Even Miss Sharpe had testily permitted herself to fall stilly asleep, and lay with her mouth open, stretched out as straight as a ramrod, and about as grim. All were asleep—all but one.

One wicked, curly, mischief-brewing little head there was by far too full of naughty thoughts to sleep. Pet, nestling on her pillow, was actually quivering with suppressed delight at the coming fun.

She heard ten o'clock—eleven strike, and then she got up in bed and commenced operations. Her first care was to steal softly to one of the washstands, and thoroughly wet a sponge, which she placed on the window-ledge within her reach, knowing she would soon have occasion to use it.

Taking some phosphureted ether, which she had procured for the purpose of "fun" before leaving home, she rubbed it carefully over her face and hands.

Reader, did you ever see any one in the dark with their faces and hands rubbed over with phosphureted ether? looking as though they were all on fire—all encircled by flames? If you have, then you know how our Pet looked then.

Sitting there, a frightful object to contemplate, she waited impatiently for the hour of midnight to come.

The clock struck twelve, at last; the silence was so profound that the low, soft breathing of the young sleepers around her could be plainly heard. In her long, flowing night-wrapper, Pet got up and tiptoed softly across the room to the bed where the cross she-dragon lay.

Now, our Pet never thought there could be the slightest danger in what she was about to do, or, wild as she was, she would most assuredly not have done it. She merely wished to frighten Miss Sharpe for her obstinacy, unbelief in ghosts and crosses, and never gave the matter another thought. Therefore, though it was altogether an inexcusable trick, still Pet was not so very much to blame as may at first appear.

Now she paused for a moment to contemplate the sour, grim-looking sleeper—thinking her even more repulsive in sleep than when awake; and then laying one hand on her face, she uttered a low, hollow groan, destined for her ears alone.

Miss Sharpe, awakened from a deep sleep by the disagreeable and startling consciousness of an icy-cold hand on her face, started up in affright, and then shuddered and aghast vision! A white specter by her bedside, all in fire, with flames encircling face and hands, and sparks of fire seemingly darting from eyes and mouth!

For one terrible moment she was unable to utter a sound for utter, unspeakable horror. Then, with one wild, piercing shriek, she buried her head under the clothes, to shut out the awful specter. Such a shriek as it was! No hyena, no screech-owl, no peacock ever uttered so ear-splitting, throat-rending a scream as that. No word or words in the whole English language can give the faintest idea of that terrible screech. Before its last vibration had died away on the air, every sleeper in the establishment, including madame herself, had sprung out of bed, and stood pale and trembling, listening for a repetition of that awful sound. Such a shriek as it was!

Every girl flitted from her room, and a universal rush was made for the apartments of Mrs. Moodie—all but the inmates of the dormitory, twenty little sleepers sprung, and immediately began to make night hideous with small editions of Miss Sharpe's shriek. Gathering strength from numbers, the twenty voices rose an octave higher at every scream, and yell after yell, in the shrillest soprano, pierced the air, although not one of them had the remotest idea of what it was all about.

At the first alarm, Firefly had flitted swiftly and fleetly across the room, jumped into bed, and seizing the sponge, gave her face and hands a vigorous rubbing; and now stood screaming with the rest, not to say considerably louder than any of them.

"Oh, Mrs. Moodie! what has happened tonight? We will all be killed! Oh, listen to that!"

"Knock! knock! knock! knock! knock! The clamor was deafening.

"We had better open the door, or they will break it down!" said Mrs. Moodie, her teeth chattering with terror.

"Send for Bridget; she is afraid of nothing!" suggested one of the trembling girls.

Two or three of the most courageous made a rush for the kitchen; and Bridget—a strapping nymph of five feet nine, and "stout according"—was routed out of bed, to storm the door.

"Faith, thin, I'll open the door, if it was the devil himself!" exclaimed Bridget, resolutely, as she grasped the poker, and, like the leader of a forlorn hope, turned the key in the door.

Bach she swung it with a jerk. The knocking instantly ceased. Up flew the poker, and down it descended with a whack, upon—vacancy! There was no one there!

"The Lord be between us an' harm!" exclaimed Bridget, receding back. "The devil a one's there, good, bad, or indifferent!"

"They must have run away when you opened the door!" said Mrs. Moodie, in trembling tones. "There is certainly some one there!"

Bridget descended the steps, and looked up and down the street; but all was silent, lonely, and deserted—not a living creature was to be seen,

"Come in, and lock the door," said the appalled Mrs. Moodie. "What in the name of Heaven could it have been?"

"Oh, the house is haunted!—the house is haunted!" came from the white lips of the young ladies. "Oh, Mrs. Moodie! do not ask us to go back to our rooms. We dare not. Let us stay with you until morning!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Moodie, not sorry to have company; "come into my room. Bridget, bring lights."

The door was unlocked. The frightened girls huddled, pale, and frightened, and shivering with superstition, awe, and undefined apprehension, into Mrs. Moodie's room; while that lady herself, crouching in their midst, was scarcely less terrified than they. Bridget brought in lights; and their coming renewed the courage the darkness had totally quenched.

"Now, Mistress Moodie, ma'am," said Bridget, crossing her arms with grim determination, "I'm goin' to sit at that door till mornin', if it's plazin' to ye, and if them blackguard spaleens comes knockin' dacint people out av their beds ag'in, be this an' that! I'll Pave the mark of my five fingers on them, as sure as my name's Bridget Maloney!"

"Very well, Bridget," said Mrs. Moodie. "It may be some wickedly-disposed person wishing to frighten the young ladies; and if it is, the heaviest penalties of the law shall be inflicted on them."

Arming herself with the poker, Bridget softly turned the key in the door, and laid her hand on the lock, ready to open it at a second's notice.

Scarcely had she taken her stand, when knock! knock! it began again; but the third rap was abruptly cut short by her violently closing the door open, and lifting the poker for a blow that would have done honor to Donnybrook Fair. But a second time it fell with a loud crack, upon—nothing! Far or near, not a soul was to be seen. Bridget was dismayed.

For the first time in her life, a sensation of terror filled her brave Irish heart. Slamming the door violently to, she locked it again, and rushed, with open eyes and mouth, into the room where the terror-stricken maid-servants and pupils sat, mute with fear.

"Faith, it's the devil himself that's at it! Lord pardon me for namin' him! Och, holy martyrs! look down on us this night for a poor, disconsolate set ov craythers, and the Cross of Christ be between us and all harm!"

And dropping a little bob of courtesy, Bridget devoutly cut the sign of the cross on her forehead with her thumb.

Unable to speak or move with terror, mistress, pupils, and servants crowded together, longer and praying wildly for morning to come.

Again the knocking commenced, and continued, without intermission, for one whole mortal hour. Even the neighbors began to be alarmed at the unusual din, and windows were opened, and night-capped heads thrust out to see who it was who knocked so incessantly. Three o'clock struck, and then, Pet beginning to feel terribly sleepy, and quite satisfied with the fun she had had all night, cut the cord, and drew it up. The clamors, of course, instantly ceased; and five minutes after, Firefly, the wicked cause of all this trouble, was peacefully sleeping.

But no other eye in the house was destined to close that night—or, rather, morning.

Huddled together below, the frightened flock waited for the first glimpse of morning sunlight, shrinking all the while that never was there a night so long as that. Up in the children's dormitory, all—from Miss Sharpe downward—lay in a cold perspiration of dread, trembling to stay where they were, yet, not daring to get up and join their companions below.

"I'll never stay another night in this dreadful place if I only live to see morning!" was the inward exclamation of every teacher and pupil who could by any means leave.

And so, in sleepless watchfulness, the dark, silent hours of morning wore on; and the first bright ray of another day's sunlight streaming in through the windows, never beheld an assemblage of paler or more terrified faces than were gathered together in the establishment of Mrs. Moodie.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

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"One was the Phantom Princess, and the other was Miona, her daughter. They were standing side by side, neither dressed in white, but both in the brilliantly colored dress of the Blackfoot squaws who stood high in the graces of their warrior husbands.

Ned blushed, and saluted them with natural gallantry. Myra said:

"I am looking for Nick Whiffles; is he at home?"

"He was there an hour ago, when I left; he is cleaning up his gun, so if you want to see him you will find him there. I will show you the way."

"No; I do not wish you to do it," said she, interposing. "I know the way there myself. I only wanted to make certain of finding him."

"I am sure he is there; it is all of two miles distant, and you had better let me go with you," said Ned, who did not like the idea of losing the companionship of the girl, now that she had been so long coming.

"I would prefer that you should remain here," she said, quite earnestly. "I wish to see him on very particular business, and wish no one else near."

"You don't suppose I would stay near while you are talking," said the lad, reproachfully.

"No; I do not wish you to do it," said she, interposing.

"I have a kind of faint memory of things very different from these, and I will tell you something, Miona, if you will keep it a secret."

"Of course I will."

"I don't intend to spend my life here. When I get to be a man—"

"Why, you are nearly a man now!" interrupted the girl, with a laugh.

"Do you think so?" asked Ned, delighted.

"Well, when I get to be a man I'm going to leave this place and see the world."

"I would do so, too, if I were you."

"And, Miona, why won't you go with me?"

"Och! I can't leave mother," said the startled girl; "what would become of me? But I will try and coax her to go."

Ned took the hand of the girl as they walked back toward the river, and told of his dreams of what he would do when he should reach the state of manhood. She listened attentively for several moments, and then suddenly paused.

"Mother is calling me, and we must hurry back!"

"I should think I had," replied Ned, again blushing. "I haven't thought of much else. I asked Nick all about you."

"And what did he tell you?"

"He told me to keep still, and he didn't know anything to tell me."

"I guess he don't know much about me, but he has heard of mother before."

"Yes, but I couldn't get him to tell any thing about her. Fact is, he don't seem to like to talk much about her."

"Have you lived in the woods ever since you can remember?" asked the girl.

"No," was the prompt response. "I was born in some city, and left here by somebody."

"You don't know by whom? How strange that neither of us can tell how it is we came to live here!"

"Do you love this life?"

Miona was silent a few moments before she answered.

"Yes; but sometimes, when mother has told me of the cities and countries that are all over this beautiful world, I feel a longing to go and see them."

"So do I," said Ned, with compressed lips.

"I have a kind of faint memory of things very different from these, and I will tell you something, Miona, if you will keep it a secret."

"Of course I will."

"I don't intend to spend my life here. When I get to be a man—"

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CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

NICK WHIFFLES sat in the front of his cabin, cleaning his rifle.

"It don't much need it, I s'pose!" he muttered, as he drew the greased rag through the barrel, and then squinted down the shining bore, "

his tomahawk descended upon the skull of the doomed Indian, who sunk in his tracks and paid the fearful penalty of his remissness of duty.

In the hubbub and excitement Woo-wol-na did not lose his presence of mind. He knew that the fugitive could be at no great distance, and he gave orders for a dozen of his fleetest warriors to scatter and search the woods in every direction for him.

He suspected that the prisoner had marked the point where it had disappeared, and they kept on straight toward it, shooting in under the bushes only a few moments behind.

But there was no boat visible. It had vanished as suddenly as when pursued by the trappers.

But Woo-wol-na and his warriors had marked the point where it had disappeared, and they kept on straight toward it, shooting in under the bushes only a few moments behind.

He had given instructions to his men to bind the white man, so that he could not get his hands to his mouth, and he concluded at once that this precaution had been neglected and he had freed himself in this way.

The other two sentinels, dreading the displeasure of their chief, had taken care to scatter as soon as the alarm spread, so that means of information was taken from them.

His next inquiry was regarding the Phantom Princess. She had been seen by a number in the evening; but, upon repairing to her lodge, both she and her daughter were missing!

His soul filled with fury when he learned that, for he needed no stronger proof that it was through her connivance that the first and only victim had passed from this fated room without going to his death.

All inquiry could learn nothing further about her. No one had seen her within a few hours, and he had now only to rely upon his own cunning to frustrate her daring attempt to outrun him.

He stood for a moment in deep thought, and then he roused up ready to act.

Well aware of the marvelous skill of the princess in the use of her car, he concluded that it would be called in requisition upon the present occasion. Somewhere, therefore, at no great distance up the river, she was now, or soon would be, with her charge.

Striding from the lodge, Woo-wol-na made his way to the shore, where several canoes were always lying. He was accompanied by a half-dozen of his trusty and tried warriors, and he still had strong hopes of success.

It was barely possible that the fugitives had gone down the stream; but as this course would have carried them further away from what must have been their destination, he did not believe that contingency probable enough to warrant any effort in that direction.

"Up-stream," said he, as he seated himself in the bow, "and row as best you can."

There were no "slouches" in the canoes, and the boat fairly skimmed over the surface of the river.

The moon was as clear and powerful as upon the preceding night, and the Indian boat shot out directly in the center, as though disdaining the current, which, in reality, was so slight as to cause scarcely any perceptible impediment.

For a half-mile the progress was continued in this manner, and then Woo-wol-na gave the word for the boat to turn nearer shore, where the stream flowed more slowly.

His reason for doing this was, in the windings of the river there were many places where there was quite deep shadow, of which he wished to avail himself. If the whites were upon the river, and should discern their pursuers, and should find there was danger of their being overtaken, they could easily run in to shore, and so long as the darkness lasted could keep out of the way of all pursuers.

His wish, therefore, was to steal upon them, if possible, so as to intercept and prevent any such flank movement.

The Indians used their paddles with amazing strength and skill; nothing but the ripple of the water from the prow and the soft wash from their ears could be heard, as they glided along shore with such swiftness.

On, on they pressed, their muscles seeming never to tire. Several miles were passed and still nothing was seen or heard of the fugitives. Woo-wol-na leaned forward over the prow, his eagle eye piercing the gloom ahead, on the look out for the first indications of the parties for whom he was searching.

Ah! it would have gone ill with the Phantom Princess had she fallen into his power at this time.

His whole soul was aroused, and he was in that mood when helpless womanhood or youthful innocence would have appealed to his mercy in vain.

Fully a half-dozen miles were passed, and he still relaxed not his vigilance in the least.

"WOO!"

He uttered the exclamation with such force and full suddenness that all the warriors stopped rowing on the instant. He explained by pointing ahead to where, near the center of the stream, and so far away as to be only dimly visible, the white canoe of the Phantom Princess was to be seen.

The next instant, the paddles were dipped deep, and the Indian canoe shot forward with a speed that seemed about to tear her in two. Great as was the skill of the woman, the chief was confident that his warriors could overtake her.

When Myra Bandman vanished so suddenly from the sight of the Hudson Bay trappers, who were pursuing her, it was only by one of her strokes no more skillful than the hundreds by which she kept beyond their reach all the time.

She was very close to the shore at the time, and growing weary of the race, she made a dexterous flit of her paddles that sent the canoe under the overhanging undergrowth like a flash, where it was concealed from any who might be passing within a few feet.

But Woo-wol-na was familiar with her stratagems, and there was no danger of his being deceived by any of them. His purpose was to keep them in view until they had approached near enough to send several rifle-shots after them, by which he hoped at least to disable them as to render further flight useless.

They had gone some distance before the fugitives gave evidence of discovering their danger; then the race began in dead earnest.

As my readers are aware, the Phantom Princess carried her husband, daughter, Nick Whiffles and the dog, so that she was under such disadvantage that she could not call into play all her astonishing skill, and the race had not continued five minutes when it was evident that the Blackfeet were gaining quite rapidly.

Woo-wol-na was the first to see this, and he cheered his men to renewed exertions. They strained every muscle and gained faster and faster.

Just what the wary chief feared now took place. Instead of keeping in the middle of the river, where they were in plain view, the fugitives began making for the shore. With a howl of rage, the savage raised his rifle and fired. To his amazement it was answered from the canoes ahead, and the bullet sung rather uncomfortably close to his own head.

But the exertions of his men were not re-

laxed in the least. If possible, they toiled the harder, and turned aside as if to head off the approach of the whites to land.

The distance was too great to accomplish any thing by this maneuver, and to the chagrin of the Blackfeet, while they were watching the swan-like flight of the canoe, it flew under the shrubbery along shore and was lost to view.

But Woo-wol-na and his warriors had marked the point where it had disappeared, and they kept on straight toward it, shooting in under the bushes only a few moments behind.

But there was no boat visible. It had vanished as suddenly as when pursued by the trappers.

But Woo-wol-na knew what this meant. The instant she had landed, the light boat had been caught up in the grasp of her friends, who would probably carry it half a mile and then launch it again.

Very well; if they could do that, so could he. Not hoping to overtake her in the woods, or to tell at what precise point she would embark again, the Blackfeet made a rapid but wide detour through the forest, and coming back to the river at a point fully a mile above.

Here it was placed in the water again, and they paused and listened.

Nothing of the other boat was to be heard.

"They will soon pass here!" said the chief; "we will wait for them."

Like a panther crouching under the bank and waiting for its victim, the five Indians lay in wait. Daylight broke and found them still there, but they waited, for Woo-wol-na knew that he was right, and his prey must sooner or later pass in front of him, where escape would be impossible.

"Go ahead," replied Nick, "but keep close to the shore, and be ready to dart under at any minute."

In this way they coasted along, until they had gone a good distance, and the sun was rising. Nick Whiffles had taken the paddle, and reaching a sharp point, he said:

"We'll go in here awhile and make a few observations."

As he spoke, he shot round the point, and Calamity gave a low growl.

"What is it, pup?" asked his master, in alarm.

A wall went up from Myra, as Woo-wol-na's canoe suddenly shot out, less than a dozen yards distant, and made straight for them.

Nick Whiffles saw that it was all up, and he made no attempt to escape!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

"ALL UP!"

The escape of Hugh Bandman from the Death Lodge of the Blackfeet was in accordance with the scheme of Nick Whiffles, and as the reader has learned, succeeded perfectly.

I have shown how well the pup Calamity performed his part, and how the prisoner followed him out at the very moment that he was directed to do. Without looking to the right or left, he headed straight for the wood, where he was met by Nick, who whispered:

"Foller me, and don't make no noise."

The old trapper then headed toward the river, which was reached before the alarm of the Indians.

"I don't know how long they'll watch that burnin' punk," said he, as they paused on the edge of the river; "but it ain't likely they'll stay there long, and then there's a chance for a powerful difficulty. Here we are!"

As the last exclamation was uttered, they came upon the white canoe, in which Myra and her daughter were seated. In that moment, terrible from its anxiety, husband and wife embraced, and mingled their tears.

But it was only for an instant, and while Myra was wondering what it all meant, they took their seats in the canoe and shoved out from shore. Myra, as a matter of course, had all her energies into play.

They had not gone far, when Nick saw that another serious oversight had been committed. The oar which the lady held in her hand was the only one in the boat. They ought to have had two more, at least, for him and Hugh, by which the speed of the canoe could have been doubled without difficulty. As it was, she insisted upon using it herself; so that they could do nothing but remain passive spectators.

"Do you think we shall be pursued?" asked Bandman, turning toward Nick, who was caressing Calamity, and praising him for the part he had performed.

"I don't think so—I know so," was the reply.

"It must be near morning, isn't it?"

"There were several good hours yet, in which we must do all we kin; do you know I mean mighty mean, to set here and see that woman use that paddle?"

"So do I, but how can we help it? But she will get tired of this after a while, and then she'll have to give us a chance—Hello! what's that?"

"It's the alarm at the village; they've found out you're off, and now the fun will begin."

Precisely where the fun came in was more than the rest of the party could see. With the first sound of the commotion, the Phantom Princess increased the speed of the canoe to the highest point.

This, as has already been said, was far less than her ordinary speed, on account of the unusual weight in the canoe.

There was little said, for every member of the company was deeply impressed with the seriousness of the situation, and they felt that it was a time for deeds and not for talk.

When the lady had carried the canoe several miles, her husband insisted so strongly upon taking the paddle in hand that she consented, and he sent it forward with a speed fully equal to hers.

While this was going on, the watchful Nick was on the lookout for pursuers. He knew that while the Blackfoot warriors were scouring the woods in every direction, Woo-wol-na was too sharp to forget the river. He was sure to take that means of pursuit, and it behoved him to see that his friends were not stolen upon and recaptured.

Nick was feeling quite hopeful, when his heart gave one extra throb as he discerned a dark object far down the river which resembled a canoe. He scrutinized it several moments until there could no longer be any doubt, when he announced his discovery.

"The varmints are coming, sure."

"Let me take the paddle, then," said Myra, with some alarm, as she reached out her hand for it.

"No, wife," he replied, without checking his labor in the least; "you have wonderful skill, but your arm is not as strong as mine, and I can carry this boat forward with as much speed as you."

"Oh, Heaven save us!" she prayed, as she covered up her face, as if to shut out the sight of those who, after being so many years her friends, she now regarded as her bitterest enemies.

Nick Whiffles was watching the coming canoe as a cat watches a mouse. It did not take him long to see that the Indians were coming up "hand-over-hand;" consequently there was no use in attempting to compete with them, when the result of the race was inevitable.

Constitutional, this he said as much, and at his suggestion the canoe was headed toward shore. Seeing this, as has already been shown, the Blackfeet sent a spiteful shot after them.

Nick Whiffles was watching the coming canoe as a cat watches a mouse. It did not take him long to see that the Indians were coming up "hand-over-hand;" consequently there was no use in attempting to compete with them, when the result of the race was inevitable.

"By gracious! that looks like business!" exclaimed Nick, as he sighted his gun in return.

"I guess Woo-wol-na is in that boat, and he

doesn't feel much like palaverin' over this matter. I wouldn't give much for the hair of any of us if they catch us."

It was Nick who fired the return shot that came so startlingly near the Indians. He had no expectation and no wish to strike the pursuers, but it struck him that it might serve to show them that, if it should come to be a fight, there would be some of it done by both parties.

Reaching the shore, all sprung out at once, and Nick and Hugh caught up the boat by concert, and plunged into the woods with it.

Thus the suspicions of Woo-wol-na proved correct, for the fugitives were attempting the very stratagem of which I have spoken.

"We'll come back to the river about a half-mile up," said Nick, thus unconsciously running into the very trap that had been set for them.

This was done, they reaching the river at just about that distance from the starting-point. Here the boat was launched, and they all took their seats in it again.

They remained concealed, not wishing to put out until they could gather some idea of the locale of their enemies. They listened and watched, but saw and heard nothing. Calamity made a short reconnaissance through the surrounding woods, but he gave no indications of learning anything.

"It's beginning to get light in the east," said Bandman, who was quite impatient at the delay; "it seems to me we are losing very precious time."

"Go ahead," replied Nick, "but keep close to the shore, and be ready to dart under at any minute."

In this way they coasted along, until they had gone a good distance, and the sun was rising. Nick Whiffles had taken the paddle, and Calamity gave a low growl.

"What is it, pup?" asked his master, in alarm.

A wall went up from Myra, as Woo-wol-na's canoe suddenly shot out, less than a dozen yards distant, and made straight for them.

Nick Whiffles saw that it was all up, and he made no attempt to escape!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

Though 'tis most fitting there should be For the dead sons of Liberty.

A monument, to show the part That they played in 'freeing her sacred heart.'

And fierce assaults of foemen strong,

(Which every tyrant under heaven,

Hath made, since man, from Eden driven,

Has sought up to this fair, green earth,

Where 'tis most fit to be born,

There yet abides a noble shrine;

Within the realms of the divine;

Where Freedom's self in form appears,

Her eyes wet with divinest tears,

And bending as a suppliant low,

She makes her home for ever so,

That unseen monument will stand

Secure in that immortal land,

Above the ravages of time.

Undimmed, unwarmed and sublime;

With thoughts of the past briefly told;

How slowly they found and fell;

Then quickly into ruins fall;

Forgot, alas! too soon by all.

IN A PANTHER'S DEN.

TWENTY YEARS.

BY JOE JOT. JR.

Another log put on the fire, and fetch your cheer up here,
For since you promised to obey to-night it's twenty
years.
It's twenty years ago, my wife, since the person
made us one.
And we've had more quarrels and things like that
than any under the sun.
You're a bigger woman than I am, wife, and you
rather held your own
Whenever you got your dandruff up and brought
the broomstick down.
I've vacated these premises sometimes in hasty
haste.
When I crossed you in a syllable—I had no time to waste.
We've lived together for twenty years and fought
most all the way.
And I've had to be very particular of everything
I'd say.
And if ever I make a mistake in grammar and call
you a fool,
You never failed to exhibit your grit, good wife, as a
general rule.
Your affectionate care has encircled my neck full
many times and oft.
But the way your hands caressed my hair was anything but soft;
And you bitten my ears in such a tender and loving way
That they have almost been chawn off, I'm very sorry to say.
I always strived to be good to you, and it didn't
take me thoroughly comprehend when I was
doing wrong.
The skillet would bring a presentment that all
things wasn't right,
And I'd never stop for my hat to get out of your
reach and sight.
Good wife, you needn't be afraid; draw a little
closer your cheer.
You'll never hurt; put down that shovell, my dear!
I'm willing to-night to admit that I was half in the
wrong.
In every fuss we have had as through life we went along;
I'll acknowledge half of the fault to-night—now,
wife, please don't be rash,
Quit! stop! cease! for mercy sake, there goes the
toll! Oh! Lord! I beg your pard—my head
there goes the light!
It was every bit my fault; ouch, where is the door!
good-night!

What a "Bohemian" Saw

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

SOMETHING very strange happened to Aleck Drew, something very distressing to Olivia Wilder.

Mr. Drew was walking very briskly over a lonely country road, all his earthly equipments in the little bundle which hung from his stick over one shoulder, the very essence of light-heartedness somehow conveyed in the merry tune he was whistling, the clear notes of which penetrated far into the surrounding solitudes. All persons would not have been merry under his present circumstances, but Aleck was a philosopher as well as a genius.

He had been recently engaged as reporter upon a leading local newspaper, but a tendency to substitute imaginary sensations for actual incidents had led to a sharp reprimand from the proprietor, whereupon Mr. Drew threw up the position in disgust, and, having already overdrawn his salary, left his trunk in liquidation of a fortnight's board, and trudged out of the country town without a dollar in his pocket. His destination was another large town still some miles ahead of him, where he fancied he might turn his Bohemian talents to some account, for, in addition to his late attempt in a reportorial capacity, he had been at various intervals of his five-and-twenty years of life artist, actor, musician, lecturer, and if he had achieved no very brilliant success, he was what is called "clever" in each and every line.

It was within half an hour of sunset, and the sky was full of ominous, copper-colored clouds, the heavy air was portentous of brooding storm, but, notwithstanding this and the distance he had yet to traverse, Mr. Drew halted suddenly in his line of march. It was only a wildly picturesque scene which attracted his artist eye, and in a moment he had out pencils and Bristol board, and was sketching in bold outline a study for future more careful delineation. There was a turbulent little river, fringed by a forest of ragged pines, through a break in which a flood of that ruddy light streamed down and ensanguined it, while bluf upon bluf rose away in the background. The artist himself was ensconced in a sheltered nook, and never observed how those lurid clouds were driving and darkening through the sky until the boisterous wind currents swept downward and caught the tops of the forest trees and lashed them desperately. All in a moment, as it were, the river seemed to be running up-stream in short, choppings waves, the intermittent gusts came harder with each succeeding one, and a sound of carriage wheels grinding the gravel road suddenly on one of the calmer intervals. In the next an excited voice was borne upon the wind:

"Make those horses fly if you can, Brinley. Why, only think of it, man! Three years absent from my wife, and left her on our wedding-day. No wonder I can scarcely wait to get home again."

"It was a strange thing that she ceased hearing from you so suddenly."

Looking out from his perch, Aleck could distinctly see the open carriage, with its two occupants, being slowly driven up the incline which the road followed; one a young, wiry fellow, bronzed and bearded, the other a thick-set, middle-aged man, who held the reins in one hand and had the other thrust beneath his coat.

"I tell you there is some villainy at work. And by the living Lord! if I ever unearth the scoundrel who is at the bottom of it he shall be made to suffer."

"You think you will unearthen him?"

"Every moment I can spare from settling up her father's business shall be devoted to that end. We will have a balance-sheet drawn and close up the accounts of the firm, as you will undoubtedly wish to withdraw."

"What has given you that impression, Mr. Wilder?"

"I think, in consideration of all this under-hand work, you will find it expedient to do so, sir."

"Meaning, you suspect me?"

"Meaning, that exactly."

"Humph! Glad it's none of my quarrel," muttered Drew, noting the fierce looks of the two men as they faced each other. Next instant he sprang to his feet, and then dropped back weak and trembling, sick from the sight which met his eyes. Like a flash Brinley had brought his hand from beneath his coat and fired two shots; simultaneously with the movement the other threw up his arm and fell backward, half in the vehicle, half out of it, his bronzed face turned suddenly ghastly, and with a great red stain upon his forehead, and blood trickling from his hair. For a moment the unseen observer sat there, powerless to

move; in that moment the murderer jumped to the ground, and, dragging the body free of the carriage, tumbled it without ceremony down the steep bank into the river. Then he was back in the seat again, whipping his horse to a terrific speed, which carried them and him over the hill and out of sight as the clouds opened and the first burst of heavy rain came down. It acted upon Drew like a powerful restorative. Without stopping to think he stripped off his boots and coat, and, taking a short run, plunged head first down the steep, and was battling with the strong current of the foaming little river as the last lurid glare from the west was suddenly obscured, and darkness fell like a pall over all the scene.

One week later Olivia Wilder was walking her parlor up and down, her sable dress trailing over the deep, rich tints of the carpet, a flush on her cheeks and a light in her eyes, such as had not been seen there for months before. That radiant look struck a visitor who was entering unannounced with unaffected surprise, and held him transfixed, with a gleam leaping into his own pale eyes, glowing and exultant. She saw him as she turned and took a few steps that way.

"Come in, Mr. Brinley. I was expecting you. Be seated, please." With a wave of her hand she indicated a chair, and herself sunk into one opposite. You have brought the books, I see."

"Will you go over the accounts?" he asked.

"I trust I see you better than when I was here last, Mrs. Wilder."

"You see me in a healthier frame of mind, and I will let you explain the business to me. I find it hard to understand how my father's affairs could have become so embarrassed as you say."

"Through unwise speculations at home and unaccountable transactions of the branch house in San Francisco; mainly due to the latter," explained Mr. Brinley, smoothly. "You will see by the entries what a draft upon our resources that enterprise proved. Pardon me; the subject, I know, is a painful one, but it is necessary it should be discussed. Don't blame me, please; I cannot alter facts."

Mrs. Wilder picked up a screen from the table to shade her face, and he could see that her hand trembled.

"It is all true?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Tell me once more—all—the worst."

"Is it necessary to distress you by repeating it? Well, then, from the result of my private inquiries, it appears that the branch house was badly mismanaged from the first. So badly that I can account for it only by the supposition of deliberate fraud. Its close was disastrous. The credit of the house here was based by the use of my private fortune, as I have already told you. For the rest, I have taken all possible precautions to hush every breath of scandal which may have got afloat. The loss of the 'Sea Foam' on her way to India is connected in but few minds with the recent mysterious disappearance of Mark Wilder."

"Brinley asked himself, despairingly, "Shall I throw up the game and make off with the funds? No; I'll not be beaten so."

"Too late for that had he desired it, for he sailed by the coast secure about her, to be balked now by a sharper scoundrel than himself!"

He was at the business house betimes next morning, but his antagonist was there before him. No one but Holmes, the cashier, witnessed the interview.

"This is an impostor!" cried Holmes, in amazement.

as the resident partner broke out in violent accusation.

"Why, bless you, sir; this is

young Mark Wilder, no other. I ought to know. I was here when Mark came in as

an errand-boy, and I saw him work his own way

up; ay, and I saw him married to Miss Olivia with my own eyes."

"Is all the world mad, or is it that I am?"

Brinley asked himself, despairingly.

"Shall I throw up the game and make off with the funds? No; I'll not be beaten so."

"Too late for that had he desired it, for he sailed by the coast secure about her, to be balked now by a sharper scoundrel than himself!"

A week, two weeks passed, and Brinley's sullen brow began to clear, his despondent manner brightened. One day he presented himself at the Wilder residence with a tightly buttoned-up person in citizen's dress by his side, and the two were admitted together.

"Tell Mrs. Wilder what you know of this person, Hart," said Mr. Brinley, triumphantly.

"Well, ma'am, I've seen him tricked out in another sort of rig playing Othello, in this very town. I've made sure of it since I've been watching him for these three days back. Name of Drew, and it's a clear case of gammon the gent's been playing now."

"A clear case of something worse. Detective Hart, do your duty. Arrest this man for the murder of Mark Wilder. The evidence is that he is in possession of Wilder's effects, and the mysterious disappearance of the latter warrants the presumption of a murder."

"Don't trouble yourself, please," said a voice at his back. "I believe you from

your knowledge of the case, Drew. Your make-up is very good, but not quite so convincing as the ghost of myself, I fancy."

Brinley wheeled. He saw a very pale, rather thin gentleman, with an ugly scowl just grazing his temple and plowing its way through his short, curly hair.

Needless to say that the arrest for murder was not made. The little comedy was played to the end, but it had not been without an object; namely, to hold the managing partner in check until Wilder was sufficiently recovered from his wound—a serious one—to take the business in hand for himself. Holmes, of course, was a party to the affair. Mr. Brinley made a mysterious disappearance on his own account immediately after it, and when Drew painted his successful "River Scene" it was bought at his own price, and afterward graced the drawing-room of his good friends, the Wilders.

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